



RECOGNITION OF PRIOR LEARNING POLICY

Policy reference UKV-QA-06 | Version 3.0

UK Versity Online Limited | BAC Accredited College | UKPRN 10052768

Policy reference	UKV-QA-06
Version	3.0
Status	Updated
Effective date	1 October 2026
Next review	September 2027
Policy owner	Quality Manager
Author	Director of Education
Approved by	Principal (Ramanjeet Singh), on behalf of the Academic Board
Approval date	1 October 2026

Recognition of Prior Learning Policy

UK Versity Online Limited | ATHE 889 | Pearson 07737 | OTHM DC1506132 | Ascentis 3286 | NCFE 8465520 | IFA Direct 283334

Document control

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Effective date	1 October 2026
Next review	September 2027 (annual), or earlier if required
Owner	Quality Manager
Author	Director of Education
Approval authority	Academic Board, chaired by the Principal (Ramanjeet Singh)
Approval date	1 October 2026
Applies to	All UK Versity applicants and learners seeking recognition of prior learning, and staff involved in admission, assessment and internal quality assurance
Supersedes	Recognition of Prior Learning Policy (QA-22, May 2026)
Summary	Sets out how UK Versity assesses and recognises learners' prior learning, certificated or experiential, towards units of a regulated qualification.

Compliance mapping

BAC College Scheme 2023 standards	5.2; 11.x
UK Quality Code 2024 (voluntary)	Principles 9, 11
OfS conditions (benchmark only; not OfS registered)	B4 (benchmark)
Awarding organisations	ATHE; Pearson; OTHM; Ascentis; NCFE; IFA Direct
Legislation and regulation	Equality Act 2010; UK GDPR and Data Protection Act 2018; Ofqual General Conditions of Recognition

Version history

Version	Date	Change
1.0	November 2014	First issue as Recognition of Prior Learning Policy (QA-22)
2.0	May 2026	Revised for ATHE monitoring visit
3.0	October 2026	Full rebuild: RPL, credit transfer, exemptions and equivalent units distinguished; evidence criteria; assessor and IQA procedure with timescales; awarding organisation rules; no additional fee; appeals route; BAC/QAA/OfS mapping and version control

1. Purpose

This policy sets out how UK Versity Online Limited (trading as UK Versity) recognises learning that an applicant or learner has already achieved, so they do not have to repeat it. It makes sure that Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) is fair, evidence-based and held to the same standard as any other assessment, and that it meets the rules of each awarding organisation.

2. Scope

This policy applies to applicants and learners on qualifications from ATHE (Awarding body for Training and Higher Education), Pearson Education Ltd (Pearson BTEC, including BTEC Higher Nationals), OTHM Qualifications, Ascentis (including Access to HE Diplomas, validated under the QAA Access to HE scheme), NCFE (including qualifications under the NCFE CACHE brand, and NCFE Functional Skills) and Institute of Financial Accountants (IFA) qualifications delivered through IFA Direct, administered in partnership with ATHE. It applies to all staff who advise on, assess or quality assure RPL claims.

For learners on Pearson BTEC Higher National programmes, the Pearson HN edition of this policy (v3.0, July 2026) applies and takes precedence where the two differ.

RPL is not available where the qualification specification does not allow it, for example where a unit must be assessed by an external assessment set by the awarding organisation, as with NCFE Functional Skills.

3. Definitions

- **Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL):** assessing whether a learner's existing knowledge, understanding and skills already meet the assessment requirements of a unit, so that they do not need to develop that learning again through a course of study.
- **Assessed Prior Certificated Learning (APCL):** RPL based on learning that has already been assessed and certificated, for example by another awarding organisation or institution.
- **Assessed Prior Experiential Learning (APEL):** RPL based on learning gained through work or other experience that has not been certificated.
- **Credit transfer:** recognising credit for a unit already achieved and certificated, where the awarding organisation's rules allow that credit to count towards another qualification.
- **Exemption:** recognition of an external qualification that means a learner does not need to complete a unit, without credit being awarded for it.
- **Equivalent unit:** a unit from another RQF qualification judged equal or higher in level and content, recognised in place of a required unit.

4. Policy statement and principles

1. RPL is a method of assessment. The same academic standards apply as to any other assessment.
2. RPL is never automatic. Every claim is judged on its evidence against the unit's learning outcomes and assessment criteria.
3. RPL cannot make up the whole of a qualification. Where an awarding organisation sets a maximum proportion, that maximum applies.
4. RPL does not remove an assessment requirement that the awarding organisation says can only be met through a specified task or external assessment.
5. Evidence must be valid, authentic, current, sufficient and reliable (section 5).
6. RPL decisions are made by assessors with relevant subject expertise and are subject to internal quality assurance in the same way as any other assessment decision.

7. **There is no additional fee for applying for RPL.** Where RPL reduces the number of units a learner must study, the Financial Controller confirms in writing before enrolment whether the course fee changes.
8. Learners can appeal an RPL decision under the Appeals Policy and Procedure (UKV-QA-23).

5. Evidence criteria

The assessor judges all evidence against five criteria:

Criterion	Question the assessor asks
Valid	Does the evidence show the specific learning outcomes and assessment criteria of the unit?
Authentic	Is the evidence the learner's own work, or a true record of their own experience?
Current	Is the learning recent enough to reflect current knowledge and practice in the subject?
Sufficient	Is there enough evidence to show every criterion in full, not just in part?
Reliable	Would another assessor reach the same judgement on the same evidence?

Acceptable evidence includes certificates and transcripts, employer references and job descriptions, work products, records of continuing professional development, reflective accounts, and recorded presentations. The assessor may hold a professional discussion or set a short supplementary task to confirm knowledge or authenticity. Where authenticity is in doubt, the matter is handled under the Academic Integrity, Plagiarism and Use of AI Policy (UKV-QA-19).

6. Procedure

6.1 Step 1: application

Applicants should normally raise RPL at admission (see UKV-QA-05). Learners may also apply after enrolment, before starting the unit concerned. The applicant completes the RPL application form, available from admin@ukversity.co.uk, listing the units claimed and the evidence offered. UK Versity acknowledges the application within 5 working days.

6.2 Step 2: initial review and planning

The Quality Manager allocates an assessor with subject expertise. The assessor checks whether RPL is permitted for the qualification and units, and explains to the learner what evidence is needed and how it will be assessed. The learner is told if a claim cannot succeed, and why, before they compile further evidence.

6.3 Step 3: evidence and mapping

The learner submits evidence through Moodle or to learnerwork@ukversity.co.uk. The assessor maps the evidence to each learning outcome and assessment criterion on the RPL mapping record. Where the qualification is graded, graded criteria are assessed only where the awarding organisation permits RPL against them.

6.4 Step 4: assessment decision

The assessor records a decision for each unit on the RPL assessment record: criteria met in full; criteria partly met, with the gaps and how the learner can fill them (for example by completing the unit assignment); or criteria not met. The assessor gives the rationale for the decision.

6.5 Step 5: internal quality assurance

An Internal Quality Assurer who was not involved in the assessment samples RPL decisions before they are confirmed to the learner. The sample covers at least 25% of RPL decisions, and every RPL decision for a qualification where RPL has not been used before or made by an assessor new to RPL. The IQA records the outcome on the IQA record with the unit reference, learner ID, assessor name, IQA name, date, outcome and any actions, in line with the Internal Quality Assurance Policy and Procedure (UKV-QA-16).

6.6 Step 6: outcome to the learner

The learner receives a written decision with feedback within 20 working days of submitting complete evidence. The decision explains what has been recognised, any gaps, what the learner still needs to complete, and how to appeal.

6.7 Step 7: records and certification

The Registrar records RPL outcomes against the learner's registration and includes them in certification claims using the awarding organisation's required method. Evidence, mapping, decisions and IQA records are kept on the learner's file and made available to the awarding organisation and its external quality assurer.

7. Appeals

A learner who disagrees with an RPL decision can appeal under the Appeals Policy and Procedure (UKV-QA-23). Stage 1 is a review by the assessor, requested within 10 working days of the decision, with a response within 5 working days. Stage 2 is a formal appeal to the Quality Manager or an independent Internal Quality Assurer not previously involved, with an outcome within 15 working days. Stage 3 is an Appeals Panel chaired by the Principal with an independent member, with an outcome within 15 working days. After that, the learner may escalate to the awarding organisation. Appeals are free. A complaint about how the RPL process was handled, rather than about the decision, is dealt with under the Complaints Policy and Procedure (UKV-QA-24).

8. Roles and responsibilities

Role	Responsibility
Quality Manager and Lead Internal Quality Assurer	Owens this policy; allocates assessors; oversees IQA of RPL; keeps the RPL log; reports on RPL
Assessors	Advise learners on evidence; map and assess evidence; record decisions and rationale
Internal Quality Assurers	Sample and confirm RPL decisions before release; record IQA outcomes
Admissions staff and Course Coordinator	Identify possible RPL at admission and refer applicants
Registrar	Records RPL outcomes; includes them in certification claims; keeps records
Financial Controller	Confirms any effect of RPL on course fees before enrolment
Principal and Director of Education	Chairs Stage 3 appeals; approves any RPL claim covering more than half of a qualification's credit, within awarding organisation limits

9. Awarding organisation requirements

Staff must check the current awarding organisation document and the qualification specification before accepting any RPL claim. Where this policy and an awarding organisation rule differ, the awarding organisation rule applies.

AO	Requirement / escalation route	Source document
ATHE	A Recognition of Prior Learning policy is required as part of centre management of provision; RPL claims follow ATHE's current process for mapping prior learning to units; appeals escalated to ATHE by the Head of Centre within 15 working days of the centre's final decision	ATHE Monitoring and Development review report, 7 May 2026; ATHE Quality Documents; ATHE Enquiries and Appeals policy
IFA Direct	Administered through ATHE; ATHE process applies	ATHE centre documentation
OTHM	For prior certificated learning, the assessor maps the prior unit or qualification against the current OTHM unit's learning outcomes and assessment criteria and submits the mapping with the certificate claim; RPL cannot contribute 100% of a qualification; OTHM may review RPL decisions at EQA; learner escalation within 30 working days of the centre's final outcome	OTHM Recognition of Prior Learning guidance; OTHM Complaints and Appeals Policy and Procedure v4.1, July 2026
Pearson	BTEC Higher Nationals: Pearson HN edition applies (RPL used sparingly, internally verified, reported to the Assessment Board and available to the External Examiner). Other Pearson BTEC: Pearson's RPL policy and process; preliminary appeal within 14 calendar days of the centre's final decision	Recognition of Prior Learning Policy (Pearson HN) v3.0, July 2026; Pearson Internal Assessment in Vocational Qualifications: Reviews and Appeals Policy v3.1, June 2026
NCFE	RPL and credit transfer only where the qualification specification allows; not available for Functional Skills external assessments; appeals made by the centre on the learner's behalf with written permission within 14 calendar days	NCFE qualification specifications; NCFE Appeals Policy ADEL-002 v2.6
Ascentis	Access to HE Diplomas: any recognition of prior credit must follow the Access to HE Diploma rules and Ascentis requirements, confirmed with Ascentis before a claim is accepted; Access to HE appeals to Ascentis within 20 working days of the unit grade being confirmed	Access to HE Handbook for Centres 2025-26; Ascentis Centre Agreement, April 2026

10. Related policies and legislation

- UKV-QA-05 Recruitment and Admission Policy
- UKV-QA-07 Registration and Certification Policy
- UKV-QA-08 Fees, Payment, Cancellation and Refund Policy
- UKV-QA-15 Assessment Policy

- UKV-QA-16 Internal Quality Assurance Policy and Procedure
- UKV-QA-18 Reasonable Adjustments, Special Consideration and Mitigating Circumstances Policy
- UKV-QA-19 Academic Integrity, Plagiarism and Use of AI Policy
- UKV-QA-23 Appeals Policy and Procedure
- UKV-QA-24 Complaints Policy and Procedure
- UKV-QA-29 Data Protection and Records Retention Policy
- Equality Act 2010
- UK GDPR and Data Protection Act 2018, as amended by the Data (Use and Access) Act 2025
- Ofqual General Conditions of Recognition
- BAC College Scheme 2023, standard 5.2 and the assessment standards in section 11
- QAA UK Quality Code for Higher Education (2024), Principles 9 and 11
- OfS condition B4, used as a voluntary benchmark only

11. Monitoring and review

The Quality Manager keeps an RPL log showing every application, the units claimed, the decision, IQA outcome and any appeal. Each year the Quality Manager reports to the Academic Board on the number of claims, success rates by qualification and awarding organisation, IQA findings, appeals and any EQA comments on RPL, and checks for any pattern that suggests unequal treatment.

This policy is reviewed at least annually, and earlier if legislation, awarding organisation requirements, BAC standards, an EQA or inspection action, or a significant incident requires it. RPL applications, evidence, assessment and IQA records are kept for at least 3 years after certification, or longer where an awarding organisation requires. Appeal records are kept for at least 3 years.

Approval and review

Stage	Name and role	Date
Prepared by	Director of Education	30 September 2026
Checked by (policy owner)	Quality Manager	30 September 2026
Approved by	Ramanjeet Singh, Principal and Director of Education, on behalf of the Academic Board	1 October 2026
Next review due	Quality Manager (Shazia Khan) to schedule through the Policy Register UKV-QA-REG	September 2027